

THE  
CATTLE PLAGUE

AND  
DISEASED MEAT,

IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH  
THE PUBLIC HEALTH,

AND WITH THE  
INTERESTS OF AGRICULTURE.

A Second Letter

TO THE  
RT. HON. SIR GEORGE GREY, BART., G.C.B.  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

BY  
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BRITISH AND FOREIGN.

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AUTHOR

"On the profounder, more critical, and purer study of nature, rest the hopes of improvement in the medical art."—*Sir John Forbes.*

"For it is truth alone I seek, and that will always be welcome to me, when or whencesoever it comes."—*John Locke, On the Conduct of the Human Understanding.*

"The pathology of domestic animals is exceedingly imperfect; their diseases are badly characterized; and the effect of epizootic causes on the human race is little understood."—*The Registrar-General's Quarterly Report, 28th April, 1857.*

"The first and most essential step to improvement in any department of human action, is the exposure of fundamental errors."—*Sir John Forbes.*

# THE CATTLE PLAGUE,

ETC.

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TO THE RT. HON. SIR GEORGE GREY, BART., G.C.B.,

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—The Order in Council, relating to importation of cattle, which emanated shortly after the first letter I had the honour to address you on some of the chief questions involved in the production and supply of animal food to the people, tends to prove that I had not misstated the existence of one of the reasons for serious apprehension. But as that Order only relates to, and but partially provides against the possible invasion of a cattle plague, leaving unchecked the actual and greater evil of supply of diseased and putrid meat as human food, I have felt it necessary to bring to your notice all the facts elicited by my continued investigations in England and on the Continent, where I have just passed a fortnight for the express purpose of this inquiry.

It being of the first importance that the undefined but very considerable public alarm which this

subject has created, should be tested by facts, so as to allay exaggerated fear and acquire a correct knowledge of existing evils and dangers, as the first requisite to the adoption of measures required for their removal or abatement, it has been my constant endeavour to examine facts most rigidly; and I have noted none, nor shall I here state any, which are not intrinsically correct and capable of proof;—such proof I shall be happy to adduce whenever, and in whatever form, it may be necessary. I reflect with satisfaction that none of the material facts stated in my first letter have been denied; although, as I had not hesitated to demonstrate defects in institutions, and shortcomings in officers, the motives existed for such denial had it been possible. But, with deference, I believe it to be impossible. I refer more particularly to the defective management of the meat markets under the control of the City corporation, to the insufficiency of inspectors throughout the metropolis, and to the very unsatisfactory state of knowledge relating to the diseases of animals, attributable to non-observance of the very wise regulations framed by the founders of the Veterinary College of London.

Having assumed a responsibility in my first letter, I have shrunk from no part of it; and the new facts to be here stated, will be so with sole reference to the interest of truth. To their statement in detail, a prefatory exposition of the questions at issue may be found convenient.

The subjects under consideration are intimately connected with the whole question of the production and supply of meat, as one of the staple articles of human subsistence. They consequently affect the two first elements in the nation's wealth,—*the public health* and the *interests of agriculture*. In spite of the very great perfection to which the breeding and rearing of animals has been brought in this country,—a point of excellence best illustrated by the great efforts being made by the French Emperor and nation to emulate it,—we are far from producing sufficient animal food for home consumption; and were it not for the imports from the Spanish ports, from Rotterdam, the Hanseatic Towns, and intermediate stations, the price of meat would be even much higher than it now is. Free trade provides a remedy; but sanitary legislation has hitherto exposed the British farmer to importation of diseases, which, if once manifested in his flocks and herds, would spread sorrow through the land. The question is, how to ensure in the greatest measure the economic desideratum, importation of good food at the lowest possible price, with the least danger to the national sources of supply; this can only be done by legislation sufficiently provident, without being unduly restrictive; a standard of moderation for which only accurate knowledge of the evils to be guarded against, can constitute a sufficient basis.

Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the

recent murrain alarm had no foundation in fact, the vague manner in which it was received by the last Parliament, the ignorance respecting cattle diseases which was found generally to prevail, proved that British agriculturists are insufficiently protected. Foreign legislative codes long since provided for the contingent evil, on the investigations of scientific and practical men; and had we possessed their knowledge, even if destitute of their laws, these could readily have been framed. The first consideration is to acquire a thorough knowledge of cattle diseases as affecting the health of man, and on the basis of the correctly ascertained data, to provide such laws as shall ensure safety by their providence under all circumstances. The British people have what they require, free competition amongst the purveyors of their food throughout the world; British agriculturists should have what they deserve in recompense for their unrivalled spirit of enterprise,—such security from invasion of a pestilence, as the wisest sanitary legislation can afford.

But, as stated in my first Letter, the Cattle Plague, also known as the *Steppe murrain*, more properly *the contagious typhus* of cattle, is a contingent danger;—the actual evil is the supply of diseased and putrid meat to the people; the inadequacy of laws and officers to put an efficient check on such fraudulent and unwholesome practice. It must not be lost sight



of, however, that the two evils differ in degree rather than kind, and that the required legislative reforms must take cognizance of all the facts of the question. Restrictive measures on the importation of cattle must, by raising the price of animal food, offer an increased premium for the fraudulent sale of the bad article; and unless vigilance at home keep pace with watchfulness from abroad, the dishonest will gain advantage on the honest trader, and the consumers be proportionately mulcted in health and pocket.

With these preliminary observations I shall proceed to make a statement of the facts which have come to my knowledge from personal observation, since the publication of my first letter; still adhering to the arrangement therein adopted, as facilitating exposition.

1stly. *Statement of the existing evil.*

2ndly. *Statement of impending danger.*

3rdly. *The inefficiency of existing laws.*

4thly. *An exposition of the principles on which the urgently required legislation should be based.*

#### FIRSTLY,—STATEMENT OF THE EXISTING EVIL.

I entered Newgate Market at a quarter before twelve o'clock on Saturday night, the 28th March. Numerous little shops were open, and, with solitary exceptions, a large quantity of diseased and putrid meat was exposed in them for sale: stink-

ing legs of mutton, sour-smelling fragments of slipped calves, large quantities of beef and pork only fit to be buried. The buyers were a number of very poor people ; the appearance of the sellers was such as would be expected, in men living by such disgraceful traffic. I saw a leg of mutton, weighing eight pounds four ounces, sold for 2s. 11d. : it had apparently belonged to a good sheep, but was obviously in an advanced stage of putrefaction. The salesmen were lustily crying out, "*Buy me out,*" "*buy me out ;*" and the little throng of ragged and filthy poor tendered at the extempore auction, until the number of pence seemed to the unprincipled vender a sufficient temptation. I sought about the market for officers ; but the beadle's closet was closed, and no beadle or inspector of meat anywhere to be found. I represented these facts to city policeman No. 287, on duty in the market. He had not seen the meat inspectors ; the beadle had left at eleven—the appointed hour. On my pointing out to the policeman the large quantity of meat in the market unfit for human food, he stated that he had no power to interfere ; *that* business belonged to the meat inspectors. He repeatedly saw the market in such a state on Saturday night ; sometimes the stench from the shops was so great that he did not like to walk past them. Be it observed, a large quantity of the meat I saw was sold ; but as the customers were not sufficient, and the night advancing



far into Sunday, the shops were closed and the putrid remnants in them. These would, of course, become much worse before passing under the wheel of the sausage maker,—their almost certain doom on the Monday morning.

Mr. Charles Fisher, inspector of City markets, states that up to eleven o'clock, the Saturday night just mentioned, he saw no meat unfit for human food in the market; that eleven o'clock at night is the time appointed for the beadles and inspectors to leave off duty, and that the policeman had power under a certain act to seize the bad meat on my requesting him to do so. The fact that those officials' duties cease by law at eleven p.m., proves they were not culpable of neglect when I found the market without them at midnight; and it also affords an explanation of the reason, why I should find the stalls of the petty salesmen in a totally different state to what they were at eleven, when the inspectors retired to their homes. Business is carried on in Newgate Market until long after midnight on Saturday night; and if it be a fact of public notoriety, that inspection ceases at eleven, a premium is offered for the sale of the worst meat after that hour. At all time when there is a public duty to perform, duly appointed officers should be on the spot to perform it. I shall presently have occasion to state the result of my endeavour to test, by actual experience, the validity of Inspector Fisher's assertion,

that the City policemen have authority to seize meat, pointed out to them as unfit for human food. At midday on Sunday, the 29th March, slaughtering was being extensively carried on at the Islington Cattle Market, which is the property of the City corporation. But, as is usual if not invariable, no inspecting officer was on duty; that is, there was nothing to check the most extensive traffic being carried on in the worst meat.

I visited the City markets in Newgate, Leadenhall, and Whitechapel, at five a.m., the 31st of March. At half-past five, the assistant-beadle and City policemen 287 and 289, were on duty in Newgate Market, but no inspector of meat was. Large quantities of meat were coming in by railway and other vans, in hampers, cloths, or otherwise packed. The large salesmen were opening business, and, almost without exception, with magnificent meat. But in many petty shops very bad meat was to be seen, and I now learned practically that some of them mostly deal in bad meat! This fact nobody hides—no *habitué* of the market even pretends to ignore. At six a.m., City policeman 555 replaced 539 in Leadenhall Market: but neither here nor in Whitechapel could I see or hear of one of the inspectors of meat. In the latter market slaughtering was being actively carried on, and much of the inferior meat carted off to Newgate without chance of inspection.

On Friday morning, the 3rd April, I entered the

Islington Market at four o'clock, and remained there till five. The droves were coming in, and business was active in the Ram Inn Yard slaughter-house, but not an officer of the market was on duty; either to inspect the meat which was being carted off to Newgate Market in large quantities, or to restrain the brutality of the drovers—many of whom are respectable men; but the conduct of others calls for rigid discipline. At ten minutes to five, policeman 271 N, was walking his ordinary beat outside the market railings, but it was no part of his business to inspect the working of the market.

I again entered the cattle market at six minutes to seven the same morning. The clerk's office was closed, and I could hear nothing of that officer, of his assistant, or of the inspector, on inquiry. At ten minutes past seven, the carcasses of two sheep, bearing unmistakeable signs of general disease, were carted off from the slaughter-house of the market. From the manner in which the two sheep were *trimmed* and *dressed*, there could be no doubt that they were destined for sale as human food. They were unquestionably unfit, but they might have been ten times worse without the least chance of the disreputable practice being checked; it would never have been discovered but for my unexpected investigation. In such a disgraceful state did I find these slaughter-houses, that I deemed it important to obtain confirmatory evidence; and ac-

cordingly Dr. Hillier, Officer of Health of St. Pancras, accompanied me at half-past ten o'clock the same morning.

We found the slaughter-houses in a most filthy state; we ascertained that horses are habitually stalled where the bullocks are killed and dressed,—a practice, to say the least, most filthy. Waiting to be slaughtered was an old cow, extraordinarily emaciated and in an advanced state of disease. The clerk of the market and the inspector alleged themselves unable to interfere with the slaughter-houses because destitute of authority. A Mr. Thatcher, keeper of one of the gates, stated that he sometimes looked to the slaughter-houses, but did not conceive that part of his duty; he admitted the state of filth, and to my remark that in plain English the market is badly managed, he rejoined, “I know it is.”

At six minutes before twelve on Saturday night, the 4th April, I entered Newgate Market. Although the weather was very bad many little shops were open, and a considerable number of ragged poor, mostly women, were making purchases; bad meat abounded; veal and beef in large quantities were offered for sale at 2d. and 1½d. per pound;—there was no question in my mind, that this stinking meat was in such an advanced state of putrefaction as to be unfit for human food;—with a view to test the correctness of Inspector Fisher's interpretation of the laws regulating the inspection



of markets, I severally called upon City policemen 80, 88, 287, and 289, who were on duty, to seize the meat which I pointed out to them ; but they refused to do so, stating that they conceived they had no power to seize it. They persisted in this opinion, even after my informing them of Mr. Fisher's interpretation. I thus acquired proof that meat unfit for human food is sold in large quantity in Newgate Market, and that the officers appointed to it, are either ignorant of their duty or unwilling to perform it. This alternative is inevitable,—Mr. Fisher or the policemen erred. While I was questioning and writing down the numbers and answers of the City constables, Mr. Robert Pocklington, of No. 7, York Place, City Road, collector and inspector of Newgate Market, made his appearance. On my informing him that putrid beef, unfit for human food, was being offered for sale at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, at the shop of J. Pain, in Warwick Lane, Mr. Pocklington accompanied me there, but he refused to seize the meat or to order suspension of the sale ; a person, who appeared to be the owner, alleged that the meat was good, and Mr. Pocklington coincided with him ; but they both said that I was at liberty to take a piece of the meat and submit it to any authority I might select. A labouring man, William Willis, of No. 5, Whitehorse Court, Bunhill Row, volunteered from the crowd to carry a piece of the meat away with me, I being anxious to secure evidence as to



every particular. He accepted my offer of a shilling for his services. We left the market and were walking along Newgate Street, when Inspector Pocklington, who had followed us, seized Willis by the coat and endeavoured to get the meat from him. I intimated to Mr. Pocklington, that he had refused to seize the meat at my request in the market, that he had invited me to submit it to other judges, and that he was now using illegal violence, from which I summoned him to desist. On his persisting, I waited until the arrival of City policeman 251, who at my request took Inspector Pocklington in charge to the Smithfield Station. My accusation, amounting to a charge of assaulting William Willis, for the time being my servant, was taken down, and as I reserved myself the right to take out a summons, Mr. Pocklington was discharged, after declining to make any statement in reply. I then proceeded with William Willis, still bearer of the meat, directly to the residence of my friend Dr. Hillier, who expressed a most decided opinion as to the unfitness of the meat for human food; Dr. Hillier spontaneously remarked, the specimen was like a piece of putrid dissecting-room meat. Admitting that Mr. Pocklington acted to the best of his judgment in not seizing the meat, I hold the above reported facts to prove that he erred in judgment; admitting that his subsequent conduct might be accidentally irregular, I hold it to have been reprehensibly indis-

creet. Considering Mr. Pocklington's very advanced age and general excellent character, I very much regret being obliged to record my decided opinion, that he is destitute of the special qualifications which an efficient inspector of Newgate Market should unquestionably possess.

My numerous duties, and particularly a journey to Paris to confer with M. Renault, one of the French Emperor's Commissioners for the study of the Cattle Plague, prevented me taking out a summons against the Newgate Market Inspector; but, under all the circumstances, I must hold the silence he has preserved, confirmative of the correctness of my opinion as to his official inaptitude.

The following police report, which I transcribe from the *Morning Advertiser*, March 30th, is another proof of the kind of meat sometimes sold for food to the people.

#### “ CLERKENWELL.

“ UNWHOLESOME FOOD.—SAUSAGE-MAKING.—John Pallet, of 23, Chapel Street, Somers Town, was placed at the bar before Mr. Corrie, charged by James Newman, Sanitary Inspector of Nuisances to the parish of St. Pancras, with exposing for sale unwholesome meat, unfit for human food, which subjected him to heavy penalties, under the Nuisances Removal Act, 18th and 19th Victoria, chap. 26.

“ Mr. Newman having been sworn, said that on

Saturday morning he was passing by the defendant's house, where he found thirteen quarters of veal, which was quite unwholesome, and perfectly unfit for human food. The defendant, it appeared, put the meat into his cart and brought it to this court, where it was deposited in the Station-house yard.

"In answer to Mr. Corrie, the witness said 'the meat stinks.'

"Mr. Corrie said that this seemed to be a wholesale proceeding on the part of the defendant, and asked him what he had to say to the charge?

"He said he had purchased the meat in the market at a cheap rate. He admitted that it was now bad, but the interior was good. He meant to cut off the outside, which was bad, and the inside would be good to eat.

"A voice.—For cats or dogs.

"Mr. Cook (solicitor to St. Pancras).—Sir, a gentleman by my side says that he will be cautious in future as to the purchase of sausages.

"Mr. Corrie (to Mr. Newman).—Pray, what do you mean to do with the meat?

"Mr. Newman.—I mean to bury it, or send it to a cat's-meat shop. (Laughter.)

"Mr. Corrie.—I shall convict you in the mitigated penalty of 20s., and the meat forfeited.

"The defendant paid the penalty and was liberated, when he conveyed the meat from the station in his cart."

This conviction unquestionably tended to warn venders of bad meat ; but the chances of detection and the penalty on conviction are so small, that the large gain from such traffic offers ample temptation. In the instance above mentioned the quantity of meat seized was very large—thirteen quarters of veal and one loin of beef ; the loss of the property was altogether an insignificant matter, for, as the butcher admitted, he knew it to be bad, and had doubtless purchased it at a nominal value. The guilty knowledge proved, it would appear desirable to inflict heavier penalties. It is stated in the report of the above case, that after paying the fine, the butcher carried the meat from the police-court in his own cart. I am informed that Inspector Newman, who had effected the seizure, was prevented going to see the meat destroyed by the urgency of one of his innumerable official duties, which caused him to pay a man, whom he knew, a shilling to go with the meat to the knacker, and there see it destroyed. I submit that no valid guarantee existed to prevent the condemned meat being again sold and cut up into sausages or otherwise used. Its previous owner, who carried it from the police-court, had good reason to endeavour to recover the whole or part of the fine out of the carrion ; the one shilling paid to the man who accompanied him, can scarcely be looked upon as a security for faithful service ; while the third party concerned—the knacker, belonged to a class noto-

rious for practices of questionable purity. There is good reason to believe that knackers'-yards are harbours of much that is fraudulent, disgusting, and injurious to the health of the population:—certain it is, that the temptation for fraud is very great, and that practically it is unchecked.

#### SECONDLY,—STATEMENT OF IMPENDING DANGERS.

Without attempting to define the precise extent of the evil, the existence of which is proved by the facts above cited, it cannot but be regarded as very great, and as urgently requiring efficient provision. Neither do I think it possible to over-rate the danger of a pestilential invasion amongst cattle. It is now generally admitted, that in addition to the epidemic and contagious diseases prevalent amongst British cattle, a much more terrible, because more intensely contagious and fatal disease, prevails in some parts of the European continent, more particularly in its south-eastern portion. The comparative remoteness of the danger affords good reason for hoping that it may be averted by the adoption of efficient preventive measures; but, in my mind, it in no degree allays apprehension so long as we continue, as we now unquestionably are, but partially informed on the most important facts of the disease, and unprotected by sanitary legislation. The latter statement calls for evidence, which, according to the arrangement adopted, shall presently be adduced.



The recent discussion on the cattle plague, and my own researches, would afford opportunity for entering into considerable detail as to the history, anatomical characters, and general hygienic bearings of cattle diseases in themselves, and as affecting the health of the population. But such a work would be beyond my immediate purpose,—the demonstration of great public requirements, due to defective legislation and inefficient administration. Obviously the prevailing ignorance in cattle diseases is a matter of the most serious moment. It is forcibly dwelt upon in the last quarterly return of the Registrar-General, and under the circumstances it may not be unimportant to reiterate the statement in my first letter, that “after personally inspecting the veterinary schools of Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, Wurtemberg, Austria, and Prussia, my brother and myself have come to the conclusion, which we are prepared to prove, that whereas England’s wealth in animals by very far exceeds that of any other nation, it is very far inferior to all the countries of continental Europe in knowledge of the diseases of animals, and in means for instruction in that all-important branch of science, and public economy.” The apparent contradiction involved in this statement admits of explanation on the basis of fact. For centuries had the disease of animals been all but exclusively treated by ignorant persons. The revival of veterinary science is due to Bourgelat, a French barrister, who, in

the last century, founded the *first* veterinary school at Lyons. His labours were so successful, our deficiency was felt so great, that in 1791 several English gentlemen founded the Veterinary College in St. Pancras. Its first professor was a Frenchman, M. de Saint Bel, one of whose earliest literary productions on arriving in England, was an Essay on the Geometrical Proportions of Eclipse,—one of the most magnificent horses that the world had ever seen. Thus a distinguished member of the French bar had given life to veterinary science ; a young Frenchman, learned in mathematics besides diseases of animals, was our first veterinary professor : but the innate love of Englishmen for animals, our natural preeminence as agriculturists, more particularly as rearers of live stock, had given us a superiority in the production and maintenance in health of beautiful animals, which other nations have as yet striven in vain to equal. These facts are worthy of reflection in their application to the health of man : it is remarkable that we have been most sedulous in breeding and rearing healthy cattle, and that our efforts have been crowned with such success as to inspire regret that it is only very recently that the preservation of the health of man has seriously engaged the public attention, as the most legitimate foundation of a sound medical philosophy. Vigorous bodies are the homes of healthy brains, these of generous and bright intellects ; hence the intimate connexion of public

hygiene with the best interests of civilization; truths well known, by none denied, by too few practised. In the hope that this digression may not be deemed unwarranted by the facts and prove unfruitful, I revert to the main subject. Obviously it is of the first importance that all that science can do to insure and advance the national health should be done, and that with the utmost possible efficiency. As subsidiary to agricultural interests and to the public health, it is of the first importance that the present unsatisfactory state of veterinary science and education in England, should cease. I state my deliberate conviction that there is scarcely an institution in Europe in which wise laws are so violated, means of learning and instruction so neglected, as in the Veterinary College of London. I cannot make this statement, prepared as I am to substantiate it by facts in every particular, without expressing deep regret for being obliged to cause temporary pain, by unjustly reflecting on some deserving persons. But exculpation of some would demand inculpation of others, which at this stage would prejudice discussion on the public requirement, by introducing incidental considerations. When inquiry shall have been instituted to examine the evidence on which my charge is founded, it will afford me great pleasure to adduce proofs wholly exonerating certain officers of the institution, explaining, and, as far as possible attenuating, the fault attaching to others.

## THE INEFFICIENCY OF EXISTING LAWS.

I submit, with deference, that the facts and comments contained in my first Letter on this subject, prove the inefficiency of existing laws to repress the actual evil and ward off that which is impending. My inspections of the City markets now reported, further demonstrate that, administered as the law is by the police and meat inspectors salaried by the City corporation, it does not afford an efficient guarantee for the health of the enormous population, which chiefly derives its animal subsistence from the City markets. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the laws regulating the management of metropolitan slaughter-houses and places for the sale of meat beyond the City, would be equal to the requirement if efficiently administered, the case above cited as having occurred in the parish of St. Pancras, illustrates that the number of officers is unequal to the duty. As formerly stated, the parish of St. Pancras, numbering one hundred and ninety thousand inhabitants, has only one Inspector of Nuisances; his inability to exercise an effectual supervision must be obvious, and, as proved by fact, he may even be prevented efficiently following out cases, in which the magistrate convicts on his information, by the multitude of his occupations.

The Order of Her Majesty's Privy Council, which was issued the 2nd of April, recognizes the exist-



ence of a pestilential disease of cattle on the continent as requiring preventive legislation, and forbids the importation of cattle, whole or in parts, from the territories of the Free City of Lubeck, or any other port between it and the Gulf of Finland. As a prevention against the contagious typhus of cattle, the only disease calling for legislation, that Order in Council is inoperative ; our imports from the condemned ports are small, indeed altogether insignificant compared to those from the free ports on the German Ocean ; and unless these are in some manner controlled, the chances of pestilential invasion are only lessened in the small ratio represented by the trifling number of head of cattle with which the condemned ports would have supplied us. We have, it is true, the guarantee afforded by the strict police regulations of Prussia and Austria against the spread of the cattle plague in question across their frontiers, and consequently, to our shores ; but I apprehend it is not intended to delegate to those governments the duty of protecting British interests, however much it be desirable to profit by their enactments, as subsidiary to the national welfare. It is equally true that regulations exist for inspecting foreign cattle when landed on our shores, and there is every reason to believe that the appointed veterinary inspectors perform that duty with the greatest efficiency which the circumstances admit of ; but no zeal, no intelligence in the inspectors, can be effectual



in the present state of the law, even setting aside the great difficulty of determining the health of a cargo of oxen, necessarily in an unnatural state on being landed after a voyage. All authorities are agreed that the contagious typhus of cattle has a period of incubation of several days duration; consequently a ship-load of beasts might at the time of landing be in apparent health, and yet be the bearers of the seeds of contagion, which, once introduced into the country, it would almost be hopeless to attempt to eradicate. Difficult as it is to enforce all quarantine regulations, it is now very generally admitted, that inspection of cargoes at the time of landing is a measure of very doubtful utility, unless at the same time it be enjoined that the ship shall have a clean Bill of Health. On this consideration I shall take the liberty of enlarging in the following section.

#### FOURTHLY, — ADDITIONAL EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE URGENTLY REQUIRED LEGISLATION SHOULD BE BASED.

The observations and suggestions which I ventured to make on this head in my first Letter, have only acquired strength by more extended investigation. Certain it is, that the laws now in force relating to the sale of meat and to the mitigation of cattle epidemics are incomplete, and that so far

as they extend, such is their wording, and so incomplete the executive provisions, as to leave all but totally unfulfilled the great public requirements for which those laws were framed. For a complete reform an Act of Parliament only can provide ; but as the preparation and passing such a measure unavoidably involve considerable time, I venture to make some suggestions within the provisions of existing acts, which, if put into execution, must materially tend to diminish existing evils and impending danger.

*1stly.* Inspectors should be on duty in the great live and dead meat markets whenever business is being carried on,—particularly at night, which, honest people should remember, is busy day with rogues ;—and a multitude of rogues live in quasi-opulence by practising frauds on the food of the people ; on no part of it so much as on meat.

Happily a large number of meat salesmen so conduct their business as to need little supervision, but this requires to be most active, to repress the fraud knowingly practised by others. In the City markets business begins long before daylight ; the best time to exercise supervision is while the meat is being carried in ; casual inspection in a full market must as completely fail to detect the hiding place of the bad meat, as occasional visits of one or two officers in a densely crowded hall would assuredly fail in detecting pickpockets. The present staff of officers is altogether unequal

to the duty of inspecting the City markets, a duty which would be greatly facilitated by instituting a system of licensed porters, over whom the inspectors might exercise control. The sanitary arrangement of the cattle market and adjoining slaughter-houses at Islington is so defective, as to demand most urgent inquiry.

*2dly.* Inspectors of nuisances in the metropolitan districts should be provided in number and character proportionate to the duties to be performed. Thus, for instance, it being preposterous to suppose that the 195,000 inhabitants of St. Pancras parish can be protected from filthy and abominable frauds by the one inspector now attached to the district, sufficient provision should be made. That officer is thoroughly zealous and worthy, but as matters now stand, many of the duties professedly dependant upon him cannot be fulfilled. Municipal authorities may reasonably anticipate that the requirements of the public health will daily become more apparent, and unless adequate provision be made, the question of centralization must necessarily force itself upon the government and the people: already indeed there are sufficient grounds for taking into consideration, as somewhat anomalous, the existing relations between the General Board of Health and the Officers of Health of the Metropolis. Such discussion will happily be avoided, if all pretext be removed by provision for public requirements on the existing basis.

*3rdly.* No cattle should be allowed to land on our shores without a clean Bill of Health, which Bill the British consuls at the places of export should be instructed to furnish only upon reliable information, such as could be gleaned from the excellent veterinary schools which abound on the continent. In such matters partial security only engenders false confidence; the guarantee must be the most complete that can be given under the circumstances.

These suggestions I venture to submit, as within the meaning of existing statutes, as easy of application, and calculated to do much practical good. But it is more particularly for the assemblage of facts embodied in these two letters that I claim consideration, as proving that our sanitary legislation, at least in the part to which I have referred, demands inquiry. The present system cannot be endured without disregard for the best established principles of social economy. I can only characterize the state of the poor in this metropolis as terrible, far beyond what is generally believed: in their misery they are the most defrauded; but as may be imagined, opportunities are not lost of defrauding the more wealthy. Honest tradesmen have as great interest as any part of the community in the detection of rogues; but for this, wise laws and an active executive are required. What is wanted is healthy food at the cheapest possible price. For this purpose we require the greatest



encouragement to home produce ; the good market is a sufficient temptation ; but care must we taken that the interests of our own agriculturists are not frustrated by culpable defects in any system of importation, which a wise sanitary legislation could remove. The health of towns requires immediate inquiry into the present system of slaughtering, and management of meat-markets ; public health, as a science, calls for more extended inquiry into the laws governing the health and diseases of man as affected by the health and diseases of animals.

In the hope that her Majesty's Government may deem fit to institute inquiry into the facts I have adduced, I have but to renew expression of my readiness to substantiate every one of my statements by conclusive evidence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOSEPH SAMPSON GAMGEE.

16, *Upper Woburn Place, Russell Square.*

*May 1st, 1857.*



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